



Urgent priorities to support Sudan's food systems

The war that started in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has plunged the entire country into a state of war with no areas unaffected. The food systems including primary production have been significantly hit both directly and indirectly, contributing to a [rapidly deteriorating](#) food security situation with a high risk of widespread famine.

The scale of food needs is already far outstripping the capacity for aid actors to respond due to constraints including funding, access, and security. However, with ongoing conflict, the primary production of agropastoral livelihoods is likely to further deteriorate, leading to a [cascading crisis](#). The aid sector response to support primary production is vital and needs to be strategic and holistic.

The **Conflict Sensitivity Facility (CSF)** and **USAID/TEPS**¹ have been collaborating with SoilWatch to analyse food system impacts and recommendations for aid sector actors. The upcoming analysis will explore the differential impacts of the conflict on the main agropastoral production modalities – traditional smallholder, commercial semi-mechanised, irrigated, and pastoral – and provide a strategy with recommendations to improve production, food security, and conflict resilience.

The strategy lays the foundation for not only immediate support but also longer-term resilience, recovery, and development. The agricultural system that existed prior to the conflict was highly centralised and led to persistent rural poverty, diminishing yields, environmental degradation, and resource-based conflict. The opportunity for supporting a better system – one based on decentralisation, self-sufficiency, and financial, social, environmental sustainability – is available and work towards it can and should start now.

Please find key recommendations for the main food production sectors on the next page and subscribe to the [CSF mailing list](#) to access the full report when it comes out.

[Get in touch](#) if you would like to discuss implications for practice and policy.

¹ The authors' views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Immediate priorities

Medium-term priorities

Rainfed traditionalⁱ

The primary priority is to support self-sufficient community systems for key inputs, processing, and storage, to reduce dependence on centralised and market-based systems, as well as ensure future sustainability

- Map local conflict impacts and key challenges to production;
- Scale up agricultural input distribution, including cash where possible;
- Maximise direct food aid to protect seed stocks and labour;
- Provide guidance on wild foods available locally;
- Work with host communities to integrate IDPs in food production;
- Communicate limitations of aid distributions

- Form or strengthen farmer associations/cooperatives
- Provide mobile training and extension solutions
- Train farmers on regenerative agriculture
- Form community seed banks
- Explore alternative crops
- Train communities on organic fertiliser production
- Provide low-tech irrigation solutions
- Improve household and community storage capacity
- Support basic processing capacity at community level
- Support community finance solutions

Rainfed semi-mechanisedⁱⁱ

The primary priority is to incentivise cultivation of food security crops by large-scale farmers to leverage aid sector resources into substantial increased production, as well as improve environmental sustainability

- Engage with large farmers and companies on incentives to produce food security crops
- Explore procurement tools to make offtake agreements with large farmers
- Support financial institutions to help procure key inputs
- Provide labour support initiatives, exploring potential positive impacts for IDPs

- Incentivise the repair and upgrade of agricultural infrastructure, especially processing for food security and nutrition products
- Explore public-private partnerships to spur private sector investments
- Encourage uptake of environmentally sustainable practices, including policies

Irrigatedⁱⁱⁱ

The primary priority is to maximise food security crop production and improve sustainability

- Assess the current condition of different irrigated systems
- Provide critical inputs through distributions or cash (where possible)
- Rehabilitate irrigation infrastructure
- Incentivise growing of food security crops through offtaking agreements
- Where available, support training of labour

- Support modernisation of irrigation systems
- Help farmers to diversify crops and improve processes
- Train farmers on regenerative agriculture
- Address issues of soil and water contamination (mercury and cyanide) in areas with growing agriculture and significant gold mining and processing

Pastoral^{iv}

The primary priority is to maintain livestock mobility, access to resources, improve environmental sustainability, and mitigate farmer-herder conflict pressure

- Map presence of pastoral communities and needs
- Support veterinary services and animal health care
- Support the identification and creation of safe routes to improve mobility and market access
- Form or strengthen farmer-herder conflict resolution committees

- Form or strengthen farmer-herder associations or cooperatives
- Explore new modalities to help aid sector actors engage better with pastoral communities
- Support pastoralist groups' capacity to advocate for land rights
- Support environmental governance and sustainable grazing planning in collaboration with farming communities

ⁱ Generally, smallholders cultivating for a mix of household subsistence and commerce. Predominantly practiced by rural communities across the country. Plot sizes between 0.5 hectares to 50 hectares.

ⁱⁱ Largeholder farmers cultivating for commercial purposes. Plot sizes up to multiple thousand hectares.

ⁱⁱⁱ A mix of small and largeholder farmers, cultivating a mix of food security and cash crops.

^{iv} Livestock production relying on rangeland/pasture and transhumance, as opposed to feedlots.